employees of the Regional Passport Office Mumbai. Enquiries are going on and involvement, if any, of any official can be confirmed only after completion of investigations.

Issue of Passports under Tatkal Scheme

41. SHRI KRISHAN KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Passport Offices across the country have been issued instructions to be more stringent while issuing passports on priority basis under Tatkal scheme;

(b) if so, whether under the said scheme a large number of agents of ISI got their passports and misused them;

(c) if so, the details thereof and total number of persons to whom passports under the said scheme issued during the last three years; and

(d) whether Government propose to adopt a fool proof system so that only genuine resident and Indian can only get passports?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The Tatkal Scheme for issue of out of turn passports is only for eligible applicants who can be issued passports on post police verification basis provided such cases are certified by an officer not below the rank of Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

(b) and (c) The Tatkal Scheme was launched on 1st January, 2000 only and no case of a passport having been issued to any ISI agent under the Tatkal Scheme has come to the notice of the government.

(d) All passports are being issued only after due police verification which *inter alia* establishes the Indian nationality of the applicant. Only short validity passports of an urgent nature can be issued on post police verification basis and on the strength of a verification certificate issued by an officer not below the rank of a Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.